DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 586 EA 021 362

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TITLE Beginning Principals: Entry Year Programs and Principal Development.
PUB DATE Oct 89
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration (Phoenix, AZ, October 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Education; Administrator Effectiveness; Developmental Programs; Educational Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Interprofessional Relationship; Management Development; *Mentors; *Principals; School Administration
IDENTIFIERS Beginning Principals; *Entry Year Standard; *Ohio

ABSTRACT

Early in their professional careers, school principals are found to have unique needs. This document provides a description of the ways in which these needs have been addressed as a result of the recent enactment of the Entry Year Standard program in the state of Ohio. First, the nature of the new Entry Year Standard is described, with particular emphasis on the use of structured and formal mentoring activities as a central feature of the program. The second major issue addressed is the ways in which the Ohio Entry Year Standard may serve as an important model for broadening the image of professional development activities for all principals. A figure portraying the components of the Ohio Entry Year Standard: state evaluation, statement of assurance, development of program on file, orientation to district, mentoring, focus on induction and ongoing assistance, and district self-evaluation. (18 references) is appended. (SI)

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BEGINNING PRINCIPALS: ENTRY YEAR PROGRAMS AND PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT

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Paper presented as part of a Symposium at the
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Phoenix, Arizona
October, 1989

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BEGINNING PRINCIPALS: ENTRY YEAR PROGRAMS AND PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT

The findings derived to this point from the Beginning Principals Study have been consistent with other analyses of issues faced by building administrators who are new to their jobs. Duke (1985), Daresh (1986), and Weindling and Earley (1987) all described the world of the novice principal as one that is filled with considerable anxiety, frustration, and professional isolation. Thus, an increasingly clear picture shows first year principals who are frustrated in their ability to serve as instructional leaders (Parkay, Rhodes, Currie & Rao, 1989; Wright, 1989), tend to seek more precise ethical and professional identities (Curcio & Greene, 1989; Daresh & Playko, 1989), and suffer from feelings of stress associated with their jobs (Parkay, 1989). The beginning principalship is a role which calls for special attention by researchers and program developers alike.

In this paper, we consider the unique needs of school principals early in their professional careers, and we provide a description of the ways in which these needs have been addressed through the recent enactment of a formal entry year program in the state of Ohio. Such an effort has been supported by many of he researchers who have examined this issue in recent years (Parkay & Currie, 1989; Diederich, 1988). We begin by describing the nature of the new Entry Year Standard in Ohio. We will provide particular emphasis on the use of structured and formal mentoring activities as a central feature of entry year programs. The second major issue addressed will be the ways in which we believe that the Ohio Entry Year Standard may serve as an important model which may lead to a considerably broader image of professional development activities that may be available for all school principals.

The Ohio Entry Year Standard

The certification standards for teachers and all other educational personnel in the state of Ohio, effective July, 1987, required that all people hired by school systems after that date must be provided with a planned program of learning experiences in the first year of employment under a classroom teaching certificate or any other educational personnel certificate (i.e., principal, superintendent, supervisor, and so forth). It is believed that these experiences will increase the likelihood that the newly-hired individuals will achieve a greater degree of success on the job. As the chart provided in Figure 1 indicates, the Entry Year Standard calls for districts which employ professional educators who do not possess previous experience to address the following seven components:

1. Develop a statement of assurances that is signed by the local school superintendent and then filed with the Ohio Department of Education. This statement is to indicate how the district plans to comply with the Entry Year Standard.
2. Provide a description of the local entry year program. This description shall be kept on file at the office of the superintendent of the school district.
3. Develop a method for providing focused and specific orientation to local school system expectations and policies for new employees.
4. Document a process utilized for the identification, training, and eventual assigning of mentors that shall be available to all new district employees.
5. Provide a statement of how the local entry year program fits a larger effort designed to enhance the ongoing professional development of all district staff.
6. Articulate a strategy for the self-evaluation of the program at the district level.
7. Indicate how the district will participate in a formal state evaluation of the local program every five years.

FIGURE 1 HERE

In relation to the chart depicted in Figure 1, the slices of the "pie" are depicted as equal sizes. However, it is likely that some aspects of the Entry Year Standard will require that local school systems put forth considerably more time and effort for organization and implementation. A case in point, in our view, is related to the responsibility of districts to select and train mentors. Therefore, the size of the "pie slices" will probably vary from one district to another.

The Ohio Entry Year Standard has grown from a perceived need by practitioners across the state who worked with the Department of Education to design approaches to helping beginning colleagues. The individual components of the Entry Year Program reflect the concerns of educational personnel who want to see educational improvement through the improvement of educational leaders.

A significant part of the Standard calls for the designation of experienced school administrators to serve as career guides, or mentors, for beginning school administrators. We shall address this issue more directly in the next section of this paper. However, we note here that a minimal expectation is that mentors should have had successful experience in the specific roles in which they are mentoring. There is also a clear expectation that mentors would be provided with sufficient training and time so that they can carry out their mentoring duties successfully.

Two primary issues underlie the enactment of the Entry Year Standard:

1. There has been a clear recognition that, in the next few years, there will be a need for many new school administrators to enter the field. For example, the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators has noted that as many as 50% of the state's elementary school principals may

retire within the next three years. It is possible that this turnover will not be quite this high, but it is clear that many newly-hired principals will be called upon to join the field in the next few years.

2. The second issue addresses the concern that many realities facing a new administrator cannot be addressed within a college or university atmosphere, but need to be learned on the job. There must be planned learning experiences provided to people when they take their first jobs, or there will continue to be significant problems with "reality shock" during the first year.

There is no single "Entry Year Model" that has been mandated for adoption across the entire state of Ohio. Beginning administrators encounter unique problems on the job. School systems are expected to look at their own needs, characteristics, and priorities as a way to devise programs that fit the needs of their particular districts. This lack of prescription has led to some frustration on the part of some school administrators around the state as they attempt to fulfill the state department mandate. In response to this, the Ohio LEAD Center has been engaged during the past 18 months in the development of a Resource Guide (Daresh & Playko, 1989) that will be disseminated to all school districts across the state of Ohio. It is expected that this will be useful to local planners who have been given the responsibility to develop local entry year programs. The Re-source Guide will not provide any definitive answers to questions posed by local leaders. It will, however, address some of the most important issues surrounding the development of an effective entry year program for school administrators.

As school districts develop their entry year programs, it is expected that they would rely on the findings of research related to the needs of beginning administrators. Most of these studies have found a rather consistent set of themes that have obvious implications for the ways in which individuals might be better prepared to take on leadership roles in schools. It seems clear, for example,

that people should receive a good deal of "hands on" learning of administrative tasks and responsibilities before they ever get to their first jobs. Universities, as the agencies traditionally charged with the duty for the preservice preparation of school administrators, need to find more ways to help people develop skill and confidence about their work before signing their first administrative contracts. Second, entry year or induction programs need to stress the development of strong norms of collegiality within those who are taking their first administrative jobs so that there can be a realization that a school administrator is not necessarily paid to know all the answers and will rarely be effective by trying to "go at it alone." A lesson that needs to be learned early in a person's career (if not before that career actually begins) is that success as a school administrator is often based on the ability to seek support from many different people in the organization. Third, entry year programs must include a component wherein people are able to test some of their fundamental assumptions and beliefs concerning the nature of power, authority, and leadership as they step into a principalship or some other administrative role.

In general, there has not been a rich tradition of research into the problems faced by newcomers to the world of school administration. The Beginning Principals Study is starting to change that, to some extent. What is known at present provides some useful insights into the fact that beginners need special assistance and support, and that help should be directed toward some fairly clear and consistent themes. All of this should be seen as a supplement to the kinds of things that school systems determine to be the needs for effective performance by beginning administrators at the local level.

In a project sponsored by the Oregon School Study Council, Anderson (1988) reviewed the existing literature on principal induction programs, and also looked at the operation of locally-developed entry year programs available around the state of Oregon. He was able to identify a set of critical issues or themes that appear to be related to the design of such programs. The following list of recommenda-

tions are suggested as practices that may be followed by districts that want to begin their own induction efforts for administrative personnel:

1. Entry year programs will be more effective if they are initiated in conjunction with locally-developed preservice preparation activities that are carried out for aspiring administrators who, in turn, were identified and sponsored by individual local school systems.
2. Local school systems which already have in place sophisticated systems that are designed to identify and select talented future administrators tend to have more effective programs for beginning administrators.
3. Entry year programs need to include comprehensive activities designed to orient new administrators to the characteristics of particular school systems.
4. Mentor systems designed specifically for the needs of beginning principals--and are not simply adaptations of mentor programs designed for beginning teachers--are critical components of successful entry year and induction programs.
5. Effective entry year programs encourage and facilitate reflective activities and behaviors on the part of participants. Beginning principals as well as successful veterans are provided with opportunities to observe other practitioners as a way to reduce typical feelings of newcomer isolation, thus improving work patterns through a process that is based on peer support and observation. Such activities need to provide time for reflective feedback and analysis by participants.
6. Successful induction efforts are part of more comprehensive districtwide programs designed to encourage professional growth and development for all administrative personnel.
7. Entry year problems of administrators are minimized in school systems where there has been a conscious effort to structure beginners' workloads so that they would have

sufficient time to work in their buildings to develop productive working relationships with staff, students, and parents. School districts should take care not to immerse newly-hired principals in the same bewildering array of special district projects and committees that are part of the work load of more experienced administrators.

8. Beginning principals have a special need for frequent, specific, and accurate feedback about their performance. Furthermore, this feedback should be of a highly constructive nature that is made available regularly throughout the school year--not only near the end of a person's first contract year.

The final 'ingredient' in an effective induction program for school administrators is not found on any existing list of desirable features of such programs. Regardless of the structure of a program, it will only be as effective as the local belief that suggests that it is in fact the professional responsibility of an employing agency to do whatever it can to help people succeed in their careers. There is no additional panacea that can be offered that is stronger than that sort of commitment.

Mentoring

A prominent component of the Ohio Entry Year Standard is the requirement for mentors to be assigned by local school districts to work with beginning principals and other newly-hired administrators. Such a practice has the potential of dealing with many of the problems faced by the individuals included in the Beginning Principals Study, as well as subjects in many of the other recent studies conducted in this area.

Implied in the Ohio Entry Year Standard is the view that the mentor should be a person who would be able to provide ongoing advice and guidance to a person who is brought into a professional position for the first time in a school system. However, the concept of

organizational mentoring--both as an unplanned occurrence as well as part of a more structured program--has a considerably longer and more detailed history that might be consulted as a school district begins to move forward with its efforts to develop a local induction programs.

In our view of effective entry year programs, mentoring needs to be understood as the process of bringing together experienced, competent administrators with beginning colleagues as a way to help them with the transition to the world of school administration. Mentors cannot be expected to guarantee that persons with whom they work will always succeed. However, beginning administrators who are able to work with mentors should be encouraged to consider their mentors as resourceful individuals possessing knowledge and expertise that can be shared when consulted.

The background and basic assumptions of related to the use of mentors in school systems (Daresh & Playko, 1988; Daresh, Conran & Playko, 1989) and other types of organizations (Kram, 1985; Clutterbuck, 1986) is already well-documented in the literature. Our purpose here is not to provide yet another review of the history, purposes, or practices of mentoring. Rather, we will simply provide a summary of the benefits that such programs have had for proteges--those who are the recipients of mentoring activities.

Despite all the difficulties that might be part of the design of a mentoring program, there are a number of significant benefits to be achieved by the beginning administrator as protege. We believe that these benefits outweigh any disadvantages associated with program design.

Among the benefits often cited by those who have served as proteges in mentoring programs for administrator professional development are the following:

1. Working with a mentor is a way to build confidence and competence. Proteges enjoy working with people who sense that they possess skills needed to meet new professional challenges. They are able to receive the type of "tapping,"

encouragement, and reinforcement from their mentors that enable them to look to their future responsibilities with a good deal more confidence.

2. The mentoring experience provides people with the opportunity to blend the theory of administration learned through university courses with real life applications out in the field. People can see ideas being translated into action on a daily basis in real school settings by real school practitioners.
3. Communication skills are frequently improved. Working on a regular basis with mentors gives people the ability to fine-tune their ability and to express important ideas to their colleagues.
4. Proteges report that they are able to learn many important "tricks of the trade." They are often able to pick up a number of proven techniques and strategies that mentors have used successfully in different settings. As a consequence, they are able to build personalized "bags of tricks" to use on the job at different times in the future.
5. Perhaps most importantly, proteges express a feeling that they are now "connected" with at least one other person who understands the nature of the world in which they must work. There is little doubt that one of the most frustrating parts of the school administrator's life is that he or she must often go about the business of leading while in isolation. A mentoring relationship reduces this type of isolation greatly.

While the general view of mentoring as a central feature of programs designed to assist beginning administrators is a very positive one, there is a great caution that also needs to be stated. Mentors can be of great assistance to new administrators by pointing out proven and effective techniques for solving problems that have been encountered by the mentors in the past. Schools and society in general must learn how to deal with problems that we have never faced in

the past. As a result, mentors who simply point out the "Way I used to do it" are likely to be more harmful than beneficial to a new leader in a school. In fact, we have reservations about calling such individuals "mentors" in the truest sense of the word.

We have made some additional assumptions to guide our work at the Ohio LEAD Center. First, we agree that mentoring is central to an effective induction effort. However, we also believe that mentoring must be something that needs to be carefully analyzed and understood if it is to achieve its promise. It cannot be viewed as a type of magic panacea that is "laid on" in merely structural terms to an entry year program. We believe that mentors need insights and skills that go beyond the Ohio Department's or any other regulatory agency's minimal expectations that suggest that mentors must be people who possess certain certificates and a few years of experience. We further believe that local education agencies must embrace the concept of mentoring and induction as something to which they plan to be committed beyond a level of simply "complying with" directives issued by a state department of education. Token compliance is probably worse than no attempt to meet a mandate in the first place.

Relationship to Professional Development

While the topic being considered throughout the various presentations in the symposium is how principals first come "on board" into schools, there is a much larger issue that needs to be considered. Of all of our basic assumptions and beliefs concerning the concepts of induction programs and mentoring and their applications to the needs of beginning administrators, we suspect that our most critical concern is that mentoring and induction should fit a more comprehensive program of professional development. Indeed, it is our strong view that entry year programs and mentoring should not be seen as distinct and isolated efforts that are used with novice administrators and then dropped. Rather, we believe that they should serve as

devices that will be used as the opening round of a much more complete and extended approach to professional growth and development that is available in a school system. That approach should not be available simply for the beginner, but also for mentors and all of the administrative personnel in a district.

In our view, there are three distinct phases in a comprehensive program of professional development. These are preservice preparation, induction, and ongoing inservice education. We have discussed induction, or the entry year, at some length. We have noted that it is but one element of a plan that local school systems need to develop to assist all educational leaders.

School districts have a role to play in preservice preparation of future school administrators. Among the issues that may be associated with this area are the initial identification, recruitment, and selection of people to move into roles of leadership in schools. These concerns have tended to be handled rather haphazardly over the years. People tend to identify themselves and make the personal decision to try their hand at administration. School systems have traditionally not viewed their duty as one of "tapping" people for leadership roles. However, the business of proactively identifying and promoting talented individuals toward careers as school administrators is a critical ingredient for entry year programs. No program to assist beginners will be effective if the "entering material" is not of high quality.

In a similar vein, school districts must commit resources and interest in the development of effective approaches to ongoing inservice education for administrators once they have "survived" their time as beginners. As we have noted at many times in this paper, the world of administration and the world of schools is changing so rapidly that learning experiences must be available on a continuing basis so that school administrators, whether experienced or not, can learn ways of behaving that not only address the need to survive, but ultimately how to become as effective as possible.

Summary

In this paper, we have reviewed some of the characteristics of a newly enacted mandate in the state of Ohio which calls for formal entry year support to be provided by all school districts to newly hired educational personnel. This includes those individuals who are moving into their first administrative assignments. We believe that here is a significant amount of relevance of this Standard when considering the findings of the Beginning Principals Study, as well as other research that has been conducted concerning the problems and challenges faced by school administrators during their first years of service. We noted, in particular, that mentoring programs have the capability of addressing many of the concerns faced by new school leaders.

We conclude our discussion by noting that any approach to deal with support for beginning administrators is certainly welcome. However, if such an approach is limited to one or two years of a career, it will be a hollow effort indeed. The key to assisting beginners is to establish a pattern of continuous learning, growth, and profes-professional development over an entire career.

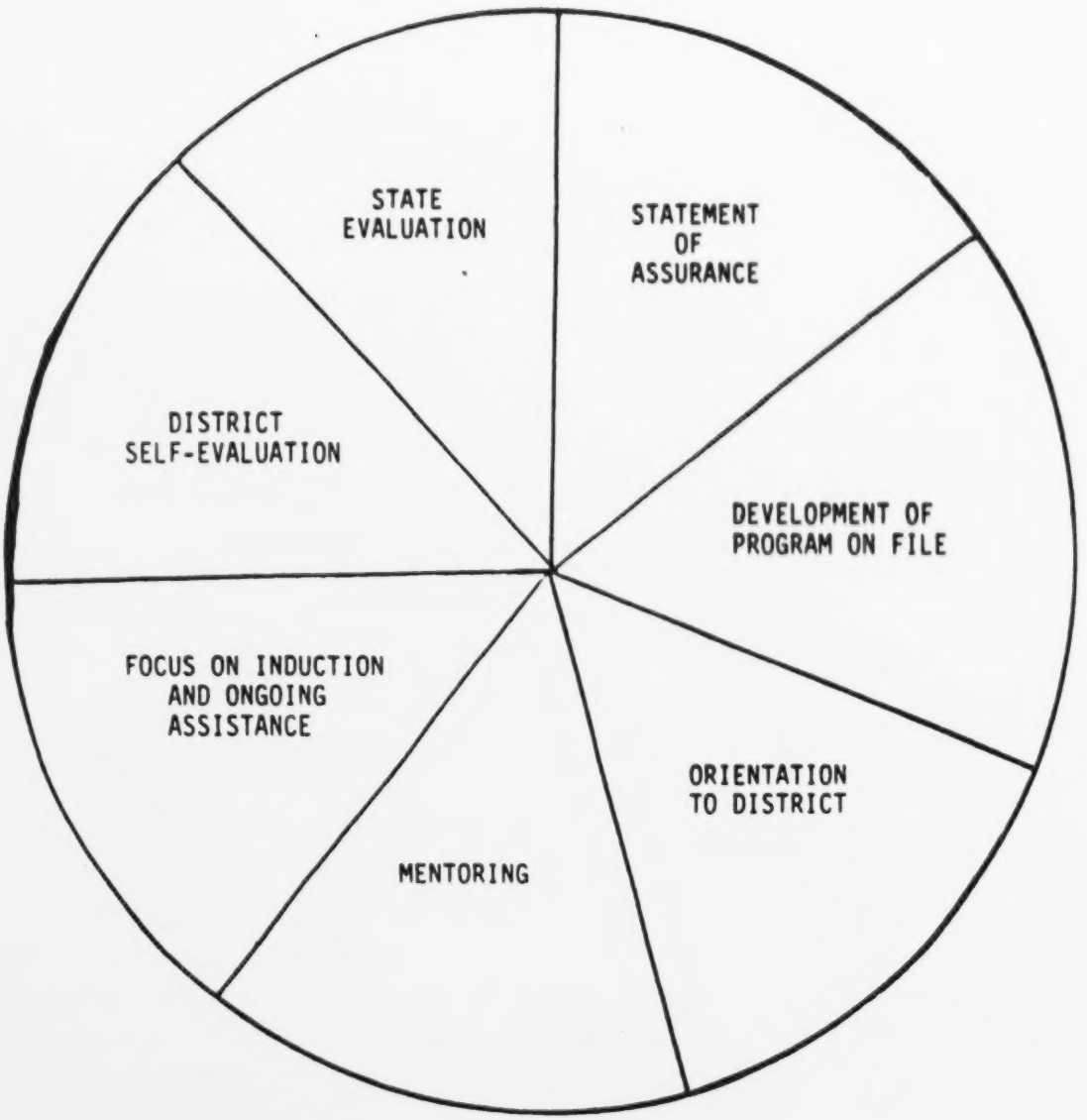

FIGURE 1 Components of the Ohio Entry Year Standard
(Ohio Administrative Code, Rule 3301-22-02)

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